Research Project

*Thesis Statement, Paraphrasing vs. Direct Quotation, and In-Text Citations*

Post-Research Process

At this point, you have completed your research process, and you are sitting there with a stack of notecards thinking, “NOW what?”

1. Go through your notecards. Sort them into piles by topic (**NOT by source number**).

2. What are the common subject areas (headings on your cards)? Write them here:

3. Refer back to your proposal to examine your original ideas. Based on your research, can you still use all of your chosen texts? Write your ideas here:

4. What CONNECTIONS exist between the subject areas you researched and your chosen texts? Figure this out by assigning each text a letter (A, B, C, D, and E). Now go through your notecards and code EACH of them on the BOTTOM LEFT with one or more of those letters – in other words, think about how your bits of research CONNECT to the texts. This will help you organize your essay’s structure.

5. If you end up with cards left over – cards that cannot be directly matched with any of your chosen texts – think about them again. Is there somewhere they can “fit,” or is it too much of a stretch? If so, don’t hesitate **not** to code those cards. Don’t get too attached to them. Remember that your essay needs to be full of STRONG connections, and you will not perform better on this task for using every smidgen of research. You are better off having fewer pieces of information but stronger connections. Nonetheless, don’t get rid of these cards – can you use this information somewhere in your introduction or conclusion?

6. **Time for a thesis!** Think about the overall “point” of your essay. What argument are you making in answer to the question “How do significant challenges shape identity”?

**Your thesis needs to DIRECTLY answer this question. Write your thesis here:**

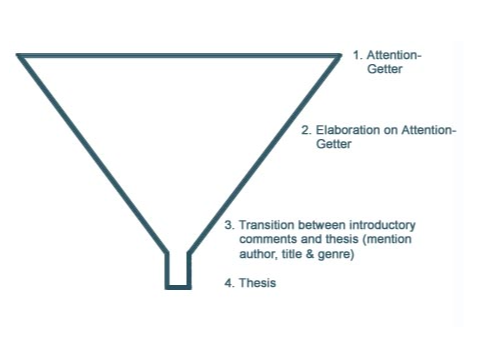
**Are you struggling?**

**Consider these thesis samples – substitute your own topics for the portions in parentheses:**

1.Based on research and reading about (*people transitioning from childhood to adulthood)*, identity is significantly shaped by (*the unique challenges this age group faces, particularly in terms of brain development and resistance to authority).*

2. Though significant challenges can often create stronger identities in people, certain challenges – especially those concerning (*the loss of a loved one*) and (*survivor guilt)* – can actually mis-shape identity, leaving people shattered, broken, and unsure.

3. Many people experience the effects of (*racism*) and *(religious prejudice)*, but the results do differ drastically from one person to another: while some will ultimately lose a sense of self, others will flourish, building even stronger identities than they originally possessed.



Writing Effective Introductions

Here are several suggestions – the underlined portions are the writer’s thesis statement:

1. Start with **examples** and move to your thesis statement

In the National Football League today, there are many excellent coaches. Anyone who has ever seen a Dallas Cowboy's game has heard the announcers praise Tom Landry and has seen Landry calmly send in the plays that lead his team to victory. Bill Walsh of the San Francisco 49ers is less well known, but sportswriters recognize him as an offensive genius. Most fans could add to this list of great coaches. However, the best coach in the NFL today is Don Shula of the Miami Dolphins.

2. Start with an **anecdote** (a brief story from your personal experience)

Last summer while working construction, I met a lot of guys who were in college. They knew I would be attending Indiana State in the fall, so when we would take a break from pouring concrete or framing houses, they would always try to impress me by telling me how hard college was. They spoke of impossibly difficult tests, hours upon hours of homework, and stern professors who cared nothing for their students. I must admit that they had me scared, but now that I have been at Indiana State for a year, I know that students can do well in their studies if they discipline themselves to study regularly, take good class notes, and miss class only for illness and emergencies.

3. Start with a **description**.

Sample A:

He was a fairly large man who always appeared in dark suits that made his cocoa brown skin seem even darker. He had a kind face with a high forehead and sensitive eyes. While he looked like a man with a great capacity for love and understanding, he also projected an image of strength with his sturdy body and determined walk. His voice could be soft and soothing, or it could be so powerful that it could rouse a thousand people to action. This man was Martin Luther King, and all people in America should be knowledgeable about his contributions to our nation.

Sample B:

The room was about ten by twelve feet, with bare walls of a light indefinite color, which may have been green or blue, or even a sick beige. On each side against the wall was a bunk of plain wood with an uncovered mattress. I could not believe that this stark room was to be my home for the next nine months. I wondered if my parents had tricked me and sent me to prison rather than college. As the semester passed by, though, with a little work and imagination, I was able to turn my room into a home I was proud of.

4. Start with a **startling statement**

Only about half of each freshman class that enters ISU each year ever graduates. It is not that freshmen students are not intelligent, and the reasons half drop out are many. Some merely get homesick, others transfer to different colleges, and still others leave for personal or economic reasons. Yet a large number of students do leave for academic reasons, and most of these students never graduate because they do not realize the time and dedication to study that success in college requires.

5. Start with a **well-known saying**

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be." Most students have heard this old saying, either from parents or grandparents. But in this day and age, with credit cards accounting for a large part of our purchases, few people can say they never borrow. In fact, credit has become part of the American way. While a credit card can cause trouble in the hands of a spendthrift, when used wisely, credit cards can help provide for a student's needs while also teaching him how to manage money.

6. Start with a **famous quotation**

The American philosopher John Dewey once said that the job of the educational system in a democracy is "to teach students how to think, not what to think." Dewey's point, however, is not always upheld in our schools as teachers sometimes impose their own political and even religious beliefs on unsuspecting students.

7. Make a **reference to something you have read**

In Banesh Hoffman's essay "My Friend Albert Einstein," Hoffman tells of how, as a student, he was intimidated by Einstein and afraid to approach him. When Hoffman finally did call on Einstein in his office, he found a kind and simple man who was glad to help him. While all teachers are not as kind as Einstein, students should not be afraid of calling on teachers during office hours because the students can benefit greatly from individual conferences.

Effective Paraphrasing and In-Text Citations

*The below materially is partially adapted from the OWL at Purdue website (http://owl.english.purdue.edu).*

One of the most significant challenges you will face in composing your research project is transitioning from notecards to a polished manuscript. Please use the following as a guideline to help you effectively paraphrase, use in-text citations, and avoid plagiarism.

**Plagiarism:**

**Using another person’s ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person’s work constitutes intellectual theft (MLA Handbook, 6th edition).**

How do you avoid it?

*Differentiate between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.*

**QUOTING** – using the original words from the source word for word. Attribute them to the original author “with an in-text citation” (Fox 98).

**PARAPHRASING** – putting a passage from a source into your own words, usually fewer than the original source. A paraphrase must ALSO be attributed to the original source, but you do not need use quotation marks (Fox 98).

**SUMMARIZING** – putting the material into your own words, including only the main points; like paraphrasing, summarizing will be significantly shorter than the original source, taking a broader overview of the source material, and not using quotation marks (Fox 98).

*For the purposes of our research project, the skill you will develop most is* ***paraphrasing****.*

**Five Steps to Effective Paraphrasing**

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original source aside, and write your paraphrase on your notecard.
3. Check your version with the original to ensure that yours accurately expresses all of the information in a new form.
4. Use quotation marks to identify any **exact wording** you have borrowed directly from the source.
5. When you are composing your paper, be sure to use in-text citations to credit the original source – whether you are quoting directly or only paraphrasing! **Any idea that is not your own needs to be credited to the source.**

**Consider These Examples:**

**The original passage:**

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.

Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47. Print.

**A legitimate paraphrase:**

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

**An acceptable summary:**

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

**A plagiarized version:**

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

**In-Text Citations**

When you paraphrase something from your research source, you should use the author’s last name and a page number in parentheses. If you do not have a page number – as with an online source – simply use the author’s last name. If you do not have an author’s name, use an abbreviated title of the website. Consider these examples:

Original source material, from <http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/identitycrisis.htm>, an article called “Identity Crisis” by Kendra Cherry:

*According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. Erikson's interest in identity began in childhood. Raised Jewish, Erikson appeared very Scandinavian, and felt that he was an outsider of both groups.*

**Our paraphrased version might look something like this:**

Erik Erikson, who coined the term identity crisis, began thinking about the concept years before he earned notoriety for his ideas. Because his looks were of Scandinavian descent despite his Jewish upbringing, he ultimately felt left out of both groups, and he spent his childhood pondering the dynamics of lacking an identity (Cherry).

**What if we did not have an author for this passage? It might look something like this:**

Erik Erikson, who coined the term identity crisis, began thinking about the concept years before he earned notoriety for his ideas. Because his looks were of Scandinavian descent despite his Jewish upbringing, he ultimately felt left out of both groups, and he spent his childhood pondering the dynamics of lacking an identity (“Identity Crisis”).

**What if we use the author’s name to introduce the ideas? It might look something like this:**

According to Cherry, Erik Erikson, who coined the term identity crisis, began thinking about the concept years before he earned notoriety for his ideas. Because his looks were of Scandinavian descent despite his Jewish upbringing, he ultimately felt left out of both groups, and he spent his childhood pondering the dynamics of lacking an identity.

*\*\*\*In this case, you use the author’s name to signal us where to look on the Works Cited page, SO YOU DO NOT NEED A PARENTHETICAL CITATION AT ALL!\*\*\**

**What if this same excerpt were from page 25 of a book? It might look something like this:**

Erik Erikson, who coined the term identity crisis, began thinking about the concept years before he earned notoriety for his ideas. Because his looks were of Scandinavian descent despite his Jewish upbringing, he ultimately felt left out of both groups, and he spent his childhood pondering the dynamics of lacking an identity (Cherry 25).

**please note that even though we are not DIRECTLY quoting the article, we still need an in-text citation BECAUSE THE IDEAS ARE NOT OUR OWN.**

**The same rules apply when we are using direct quotations from our chosen texts. Consider this excerpt from *A Separate Peace* when looking at the following examples:**

The tree was tremendous, an irate, steely black steeple beside the river. I was damned if I’d climb it. The hell with it. No one but Phineas could think up such a crazy idea.

1. Work the direct quotations into your own words, and use parenthetical citations to show the author’s name and the page number.

**Gene describes the tree as “tremendous, an irate, steely black steeple” (Knowles 14).**

2. If you are using the author’s name to introduce the quotation, you only need the page number in your parenthetical citation.

**Speaking from Gene’s third person limited point of view, Knowles uses the words “steely black steeple” (14) to describe the tree.**

3. Introduce the author’s name in the first sentence, insert a colon, and use the author’s full sentence in quotation marks.

Knowles is completely direct in the first sentence of the flashback: “The tree was tremendous, an irate, steely black steeple beside the river” (14).

4. If you need to do so, indicate changes to formatting OR article additions with brackets like these [ ]. If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or words by using ellipsis marks, which are three periods

( . . . ) preceded and followed by a space.

**According to Knowles, “[t]he tree was tremendous . . . [a] steely black steeple” (14).**

This is how you cite poetry – not by page number, but line number. Use a lowercase “l” for “line”:

**When Plath states, “You do not do” (l. 1), she is speaking directly to her deceased father.**

When quoting more than one line of poetry, use a slash ( / ) to indicate line breaks and a “ll.” to indicate that it is more than one line:

**Updike notes that “Pearl Avenue runs past the high-school lot, / Bends with the trolley tracks, and stops” (ll. 1-2), making a direct comparison between this street and Flick Webb’s basketball career.**